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TAGS: [KMDR](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ AND MIDDLE EAST

Summary

-- Lead story in all papers today, January 27, focuses on King Abdullah's announcement of a new initiative to implement political decentralization in Jordan. Another lead story highlights the "bloody day" for the U.S. in Iraq with a death toll of 36 US troops. Front pages of all papers also highlight the resumption of diplomatic talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Editorial Commentary

-- "Where did Bush go wrong?"

Former Minister of Information and columnist Saleh Qallab writes on the back-page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (01/27): "This is a question that the U.S. President should ask himself, now that he assumes the position on top of the pyramid of responsibility for another four years and while Iraqis head for the ballot boxes as if they are being taken to the execution arena.. All those on whom the U.S. President depended were either ignorant and stupid or perhaps working on behalf of others at the expense of the interests of their own country.. All Iraqis agree that the days that followed the victory in the war and the fall of the regime were promising.. So what happened and why did the situation turn upside down? What happened is that Bremer drowned himself in some deadly sins. In addition to dissolving the Iraqi state, army, security forces, intelligence forces and border control and antagonizing anyone with any sort of connection with the former regime, Bremer could not rein in the U.S. army, which turned in a matter of days from being liberation forces bringing democracy and human rights into occupation forces killing, stealing and torturing. The people whom President Bush delegated to handle Iraq committed a crime against their president and their country when they, in turn, depended on middlemen who pushed them deeper into the Iraqi quagmire. Those on whom the President depended dealt with a country of numerous and dangerous complexities in a nave and superficial manner. They tried to bypass transitional stages and move directly from a totalitarian and oppressive system to the chaos of democracy and public freedoms, thus creating the results we see today: a situation very difficult to handle."

-- "Questions that need answers"

Daily columnist Mohammad Amayreh writes on the op-ed page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (01/27): "Only a few days before the Iraqi elections, it is clear that resistance operations against the American occupation forces and the allied forces are escalating.. The Iraqis do not conceal their concern about the effect of these elections on their country's unity, sovereignty and independence, particularly when the elections law allows Jewish Iraqis to take part in them. Holding the Iraqi elections under circumstances marked by lacking security and absence of effective political authority tends to characterize these elections by a lack of integrity, which in turn casts doubt on the results.. How much will the elections be representative of the Iraqi people? To what level can they be considered honest, fair and free of foreign interventions? How successful will the resistance be on one hand and the terrorist groups on the other in influencing the elections or its results? These are questions that we cannot answer now, and we will have to wait for the answer to come from the Iraqi people on election day."

-- "Iraq and the booby-trapped elections!"

Daily columnist Ibrahim Absi writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour

(01/27): "Even if we assume that the Iraqi elections achieve the 'happy ending' that the U.S. administration and interim Iraqi government dream of, what could the results of these elections be? Could the elections yield a democratically elected Iraqi government that dares to say it is the sole legitimate representative of all the races and sects of the Iraqi people? Would this government be capable of making independent and sovereign decisions that respond to the needs and aspirations of the Iraqi people? Would this government be able to rebuild Iraq and breathe life into the Iraqi state institutions? Would this government be able to provide security and put a stop to the chaos, violence, kidnappings and murder in the Iraqi cities? How would this 'democratically' elected government be able to maintain the national unity of the people when it does not represent all the spectrums of the Iraqi people? And when the interim Iraqi government along with the U.S. administration and the U.S. army were unable to bring Iraq out of its tragic situation to this day, would it be possible for the elected Iraqi government to save the Iraqi people? No matter how optimistic and good intentioned it is, the elected Iraqi government will not be able to bring back normal life to Iraq and the Iraqi people.. Going back to the original question: what could the results be, the answer, simply and clearly, is: another Iraqi government that follows the U.S. occupation without the right to make sovereign and independent decisions, but rather decisions that are in line with America's wishes, dictates, interests and colonialist aspirations in Iraq. The most dangerous result of the elections would be the withdrawal or retreat of the American army from the Iraqi cities into agreed-upon American basis within Iraq, leaving the cities subject to ethnic struggles, eventually leading to Iraq's division under American custodianship, just as Israel had dreamed of and just as Washington had planned for right from the beginning."

-- "More to mark time"

Daily columnist Mahmoud Rimawi writes on the op-ed page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (01/27): "U.S. Assistant Secretary of State William Burns started another tour of the region.. One is likely to rule out the possibility that Burns' tour would yield concrete results, with the exception of some cordial talk and positive statements, since the Republican administration does not have a project based on international legitimacy to implement peace on the ground, and since this old-new administration has given a free hand to Sharon.. What will Burns then talk about? He will speak of calm, conducting reforms in the Palestinian institutions, easing the suffering of people. Right. But for what? Most likely, it is to continue to mark time and prolonging the life of the colonialist and military occupation."

-- "America and Israel address the Arab mind"

Daily columnist Fahd Fanek writes on the back-page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (01/27): "Is it true that the neo-conservatives and extremist right-wing who have control in Washington and Tel Aviv do not care about the opinions of people who criticize America and Israel? To say that the neo-conservatives, who are ruling in Washington and Tel Aviv, are not responsive to international and Arab public opinion would be true. Yet, this does not mean that they do not care about international or Arab public opinion or that they do not seek to improve America's image in the eyes of the world and the Arabs. The proof of that is that they spend hundreds of millions of dollars on media outlets that address the people of the world in their own languages, most significantly of which are the American Al-Hurra TV and Radio Sawa and the Israeli Radio. Did these American and Israeli media outlets succeed in attracting the Arab people? This is a big question, but the certain thing is that media in itself does not create facts, but tries to polish them and set them forth. The reality of American and Israeli behavior in Iraq and Palestine is ugly and an image the media is unable to twist convincingly."

-- "In memory of the victims"

Columnist Su'oud Qubailat writes on the op-ed page of independent Arabic daily Al-Ghad (01/27): "Israel marks the holocaust at Auschwitz with a display of blackmail and show-off, presenting itself as the sole legitimate representative for the victims and completely ignoring the fact that other people suffered as well.. Many researchers have exposed the falseness of Israel's 'sympathy' towards the victims..

Moreover, the holocaust was one of the false justifications used by the Zionist Movement and the imperialist West to establish Israel in Palestine, and later became the most effective method to blackmail Germany.. The people in Tel Aviv and various western capitals mark the memory of the victims of Auschwitz and they do so with the backdrop of the bombings of Palestinian and Iraqi cities and the shouts of the tortured in American prisons in Iraq and Guantanamo and in Zionist prisons in Palestine.. While the Zionists and the West cry over the victims of the holocaust, the entire world, watching what they are doing to the Palestinians, the Iraqis, the Afghanis, etc., does not believe these false emotions and is disgusted by all this hypocrisy."

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